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IN THE NEAR EAST
REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO
INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES
AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF
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ARABS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-eighth year

Letter dated 1 April 1993 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Pursuant to my recent letters on the dangerous and deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, I would like to bring to your attention the fact that the repressive policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people are continuing and escalating. Recently, these policies and practices took on additional dimensions when, on 30 March 1993, the Israeli Government declared several new repressive measures, namely the sealing off of all the occupied territory, except Arab Jerusalem, which effectively divided the West Bank into two separate, isolated parts; the increasing of the number and activities of the armed forces in the occupied territory; and the changing of open-fire regulations for Israeli soldiers against Palestinian civilians.

During the month of March alone, the number of Palestinian casualties at the hands of the Israeli army and the armed colonial settlers have amounted to 28 Palestinian civilians killed, including 11 children under 16 years of age, and more than 800 injured. In addition, other Israeli practices, which frequently constitute collective punishment, have continued unabated, such as the destruction of homes through the use of anti-tank missiles, deportation, imposition of curfews, administrative detention, the uprooting of trees and crops, and so on.

The recent Israeli measure of closing the occupied territory gives us another example of the configuration of the Israeli positions. On the one hand, Israel wants to punish the Palestinian people, even if that means de facto recognition of the distinct and separate nature of the Palestinian territory. Yet, on the other hand, Israel continues to refuse to recognize the Palestinian territory as an occupied one or even to admit that it is not an Israeli land.

I would like also to refer to the letter of the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, dated 29 March 1993 (S/25485), which is another example of the Israeli attitude undermining the efforts of several parties who have been seeking to limit the negative effects on the current peace process of the Israeli policies and practices against our people.

It is hard to believe the extent of the inconsideration of that letter and the attempts made to twist the facts of the situation and, more importantly, to disregard the real reasons behind the dangerous situation prevailing today. Unfortunately, the letter reflects the official Israeli policy, which is insistent upon not recognizing the Israeli occupation itself, and its continuity for 26 years, as the underlying cause of the prevailing situation in the Palestinian territory. This policy is also insistent upon not recognizing that the "Israeli citizens" present in the occupied Palestinian territory are in fact colonial settlers brought there by the Israeli authorities in flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and against numerous Security Council resolutions as well as resolutions of other United Nations organs. It is also insistent upon not admitting the effect of the organized Israeli actions and practices, which have been continuously condemned by the international community, and which have resulted in destroying the Palestinian economic and social structures and preventing the Palestinian people from exercising their national rights.

There is no normal human being who would not regret the bloodshed of any civilian, whether Arab, Jewish or any other civilian caught in the midst of a conflict. However, it is only racist thinking that can lead to blaming the victim and to labelling the occupied as "terrorist" when he or she is merely reacting to the occupier's policies and practices or when he or she resists the occupation.

For our part, we have tried in our past letters to avoid personal accusations and distasteful name-calling in spite of the vast amount of offensive positions expressed by several Israeli officials, including the Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. Rabin, expressing his wish "to see Gaza drown into the sea", and including members of the parliament such as Mr. Shamir and Mr. Eitan calling for the killing of any Palestinian who may think of killing any Jew, even after that Palestinian is apprehended. Those calls were effectively heeded when colonial settlers from the Sussiah settlement near Al-Khalil caught, on 23 March 1993, a 19-year-old youth from Yatah, Jawad Jamil Hoshia, bound his hands, tortured him for some time, and then shot him in the head.

In spite of the above-mentioned harsh realities, the official Palestinian policy remains unchanged, both with regard to the criteria of the intifadah of the Palestinian people against the Israeli occupation and with regard to the Palestinian commitment to the current peace process, to which we have made a lot

of contributions in an effort to see it succeed. At the same time, we have made it clear that the Israeli policies and practices against our people, including the deportation by Israel of more than 400 Palestinian civilians on 17 December 1992, Israeli non-compliance with resolution 799 (1992) of 18 December 1992, and the continuous repression of our people under occupation, seriously undermine the prospects of the peace process. We believe that these represent serious obstacles that must be removed for the peace process to resume and succeed.

At the same time, we repeat our call for the international community, and specifically the Security Council, to shoulder its responsibility and to provide protection for the Palestinian people, in accordance with Security Council resolution 681 (1990) of 20 December 1990. In this regard, we refer to the request made on 22 March 1993 by the Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of March on behalf of the Group for the Security Council to meet in order to consider the "serious situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem".

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 30, 35, 73 and 74, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nasser AL-KIDWA
Permanent Observer of Palestine
to the United Nations